

THE LINK

Website address: <http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm>

May 2002

The National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

2002 Executive Board

President

*William Hunt
Minnesota*

Vice President

*Ann English
Minnesota*

Treasurer

*Charles Roberts
Tennessee*

Corresponding Secretary

*Joyce Morgan
Washington, DC*

Recording Secretary

*Sylvia Rainford
Minnesota*

Parliamentarian

*Cynthia Jordan
North Carolina*

Historian

*Patti Jackson-Kelly
Iowa*

2002 Regional Representatives

East

Wytona Jackson, PA

Midwest

Carzella Pritchett, IL

National Headquarters

Willie Pittman, MD

Northern Plains

Deric Clemons, CO

South Central

Jacqueline Thibodeaux, TX

Southeast

Ed. Thompson, Jr., KY

West

Richard Bruce, NM

2002 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

We are already planning to further intensify our NRCS training focus (if that's possible!) during our December 2-6, 2002 meeting in Arlington, TX. We already know and accept the challenge that whatever happens in Texas has to be bigger, better, and jumbo-sized! Theme for this year's conference is: Building Our Future Through Educational Opportunities... Tomorrow Is Now!!!

Under the very able leadership of new West Virginia state conservationist Lillian Woods, our Employee Development and Program committees are already working overtime on our behalf. NRCS Regional and State leadership in Texas have been informed of our plans and have given us their verbal support for a successful conference. I know I can also count on each and every one of us to give Steve Smith and our host Texas chapter our full support.

The training conference will take place at the Wyndham Arlington DFW Airport South, Arlington,



Arlington, Texas

December 2-6, 2002

Conference Site

Texas. The prices for the rooms are \$77.00 for single and \$102.00 for double per night plus tax.

For reservations, individuals can call the Wyndham Arlington direct at 1-800-442-7275. Be sure to request The Organization room block in order to receive the group rate. Cut-off date for room reservations is November 1, 2002. The address for the hotel is 1500 Convention Center Drive.

Plan now to attend and plan early. Do identify NOW with your supervisor and document in CAMS your training needs to be included in

your individual development plan.

Also, don't forget when you return home to document in your IDP and show, through on-the-job performance, the increased ASK levels you have achieved as a result of receiving Organization training.

After all, your supervisor and the agency will have made a substantial commitment in terms of time and money to allow us to attend the training and to be away from our jobs for this period of time.

Continued on Page 7

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



William Hunt

What a wonderful time we had in Memphis last year! Interesting, jam-packed general and breakout training sessions every hour of every day. Wow; it just doesn't get any better than that! I don't know about you but by the end of the week your officers, regional representatives, and committee chairs were physically and emotionally spent! But how grateful we all felt basking with you in the afterglow of a hard, but important, training job well done.

For those of you fortunate enough to have attended, we hope you've also had time to help us reflect and continually improve. Our Memphis session was deliberately structured with you and enhancing our collective NRCS careers in mind.

The feedback received so far from Organization members, nonmembers, guests, and NRCS top management tells us we got it right! We got it right in terms of content and variety of technical and leadership training for the diverse careers of our many members. We got it right in terms of presenting a range of NRCS mission-critical technical subjects.

Words alone cannot adequately express our thanks to so many of you who did so much so well. It was truly a team effort of love, sweat, and yes, even a few tears. ALL our members, presenters, and exhibitors supported The Organization extremely well this past year. Give yourself a standing ovation; it's well deserved.

On behalf of your national officers, regional representatives, and chapter presidents I'm awfully glad we came for and with you. The pride we saw in your eyes and heard in your expressions of support as we left the conference, and even later, made it all worthwhile. With an outstanding group of people like you to work with we can honestly say it's an honor to have the opportunity to represent and serve you.

It was fun training, learning, and networking with such a great group of professional NRCS employees and other guests. Everybody participated beautifully! Absolutely top quality instruction matched only by top quality member participation. I commend you for your outstanding support, attendance, and the continual professionalism exhibited throughout the conference.

Our thanks also go to former Chief Pearlie Reed and the entire NRCS national leadership team for their support. Our National Employee Development Center staff, Centers and Institutes, 1890 and 1862 colleges and universities, and exhibitors were also wonderfully helpful and supportive. Your collective contributions were the key to our success. Thanks.

Our Employee and Career Development, Program Planning, and Communications committees under the outstanding leadership of Melvin Womack, Demitrice Boozer, Renna Owens, Cara Clark, and Esther Bright did a marvelous job as did basically all our committees.

Our collective thanks to all of you. And thanks to the overwhelming response from many of you, we worked Doris Washington and the Membership committee overtime keeping up with the 51 new lifetime award presentations!

Let me let you in on a secret though-- we're already on a pace to exceed last year's record-breaking Life Membership accomplishments. Just keep those Organization self-sufficiency cards and letters coming in!

Our entire host Tennessee chapter, under the very capable leadership of president Kay Cox did a fantastic job. Gary and Sherry Watson and the entire Arkansas chapter, and other surrounding chapters, all voluntarily chipped in whenever and wherever needed; they hardly had to be asked. They saw what needed to be done, volunteered their time, and just did it. That's real teamwork in action!

In Memphis we recognized 48 new and 51 total members for their Life Membership commitment to The Organization. Thanks is hardly enough for your outstanding response and

support. Since Memphis, 14 new Life Members have signed on.

Another 34 members are making installment payments to be fully paid Life members by our 2002 annual training conference date.

A dozen additional members have verbally committed to achieving Life membership status this calendar year. You members are serious and we're behind you 100%!

Folks, you are proof-positive there is tremendous strength in numbers of members working together on a common purpose and agenda.

We can hardly wait until our Texas conference to share with you all the good news of our progress on the three primary goals you set for us in December 2000.

We're doing great as an Organization; just continue to stay the course. The battle is not yet won but achievement of our Organization goals are clearly within sight!

*Find out
information
about The
Organization at
<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm>*

*(currently being
moved)*

I don't necessarily have to like my players and associates but as the leader I must love them. Love is loyalty, love is teamwork, love respects the dignity of the individual. This is the strength of any organization.

Vince Lombardi

NRCS WELCOMES NEW CHIEF



Bruce I. Knight became the Chief of the Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS) effective May 6, 2002.

He is responsible for the agency's \$1.3 billion annual budget and approximately 12,000 employees.

Knight previously served for 7 years as

vice president for public policy for the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) in Washington, D.C. NCGA is a producer-directed trade association representing U. S. corn growers.

He served on the staff of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, Kan., focusing on development of the conservation title of the 1996 Farm Bill.

He also worked for the National Association of Wheat Growers and as a legislative assistant to

Rep. Fred Grandy, Iowa, and Sen. James Abdnor, S.D. A native of Gann Valley, S.D., Knight has been a farmer and rancher since 1976 for a 1,500-acre diversified grain and cattle operation using no-till and rest rotation grazing systems.

He attended South Dakota State University.

The Organization extends a heartfelt welcome to Mr. Knight and looks forward to a rewarding working relationship.

PEARLIE REED GOES TO CALIFORNIA

Former Chief Pearl Reed changed jobs within NRCS on May 6, 2002. He became the Regional Conservationist for the Western Region after serving as Chief of NRCS since March 1998.

Mr. Reed is "known for his strong leadership,

clear vision, and keen understanding of how to integrate and implement massive change." Therefore great things are surely in store for the West Region.

Mr. Reed distinguished himself as "the first" on many fronts. The

Organization has benefited from his support and leadership. Thank you Mr. Reed.

FIRST BLACK FEMALE STATE CONSERVATIONIST



Lillian Woods helped NRCS make history during Women's History Month in March 2002. She was selected as the State Conservationist for West Virginia.

Lillian assumed her duties as the head of NRCS in West Virginia beginning April 2002. Prior to this appointment she was the Strategic Planner in the Mid-West

Region, Director of the Pacific Basin (another first!), Assistant State Conservationist in Indiana, District Conservationist in DC and Kansas, and Soil Conservationist in Maryland.

Lillian's pioneering career has broken the proverbial barrier for Black female leaders in NRCS. In the nearly 70 year history of the NRCS organi-

zation, no Black female has ever been selected to serve as the highest ranking employee within a state... until now. While many other Black females have served in key leadership positions, only Jackie Sutton has been a Senior Executive (over 20 years ago.)

Congratulations Lillian!! Best wishes for a long and successful career.

Nominating Committee News

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Georgia State Conservationist Leonard Jordan, is gearing up for a busy election year. Both the Executive Board and Regional Representative positions on the ballot.

Therefore, the committee is anticipating "a few good men" and women to toss their names in the election pool. If you're interested in running and need to know more about a particular position, consult The Organization's Constitution and Bylaws or talk with someone who has held that office.

Often, an incumbent can give you the best scoop on what's really expected.

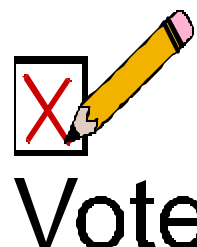
With a business plan and budget in place, the committee has a very active calendar that can only be successful with input from you – The Organization's membership.

More specifically, when the time comes – you need to VOTE! The committee will call for **bios in July** with ballots being mailed to you in August. So, if you're thinking about running – dust off those resumes!

Should you have any questions about the nomination or election process, feel free to contact a member of the committee – Perdita Savage Belk, Georgia (Forest Service); Ken Brashear, Colorado; Kurt Readus, Arizona; Jackie Ros-

coe, Washington, DC; Mary Wheeler, Illinois; or Jeanette Bradley, Arkansas.

Contact Perdita at (404) 347-7229 or pbelk@fs.fed.us. Information about the committee can also be found on The Organization's web page.



LIFE-TIME MEMBERS EXCEL

Did you know that 23 of the original "charter" members of The Organization are also now Life Members? The cream keeps rising to the top! The cream of the crop includes the following:

Charles Adams, SERO
Leroy Brown, IA
Walt Douglas, SC
Carlos Henning, NHQ
Leonard Jordan, GA
Bennie Leflore, NHQ
Sherman Lewis, retired
Harvey Mack, WRO

Sarah Marshall, NHQ
Dewayne Mays, NSSL
Joyce Morgan, NHQ
Travis Neely, MLRA-IN
Lewis Nichols, IL
Horace Smith, retired
Leroy Stokes, NPRO
Jim Tatum, retired

Johnny Trayvick, AL
Gary Watson, AR
Charles Whitmore, MWRO
Ron Williams, MI
Melvin Womack, NHQ
Lillian Woods, WV
Lloyd Wright, retired

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP: WE NEED YOU

Membership" and "Sustaining annual membership" the annual amount of payment is \$130. It is incorrectly stated as \$45 on our web site.

This is important because the membership voted and approved at our annual meeting last November in Memphis some additional benefits for "Sustaining" Membership. Those persons contributing at least \$130 per year will be awarded an Organization polo or other quality

shirt with our logo and their name embroidered.

For annual dues payers, the \$130 includes their \$45 annual payment and the remaining \$85 is used to support the annual ongoing expenses of The Organization.

For continuous "sustaining" membership a free replacement of this polo or other shirt will be awarded at no extra cost every 5 years.

We can't carry out this membership commitment for less than the \$130 minimum annual sustaining payment.

If you obtained a form off of our web-site to be a sustaining life member but submitted less than \$45, then we need you to remit the additional \$85 by July 1, 2002. I

f you have questions, contact Charles Roberts, Treasurer for The Organization.

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST AT WORK

Partial Reprint from Dundee Press



Norwood showed seedling planters how to trim extra roots



the Dundee High School cross country team, and some Viking Volunteers



Rob Peven showed students how to plant seedlings

Alfonzo Norwood is the District Conservationist in the Monroe Field Office in Michigan. This story highlights the vast partnerships he engages to plan and implement a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project.

The planting of the West County Park, a tract of land off Rightmire Road, east of Stowell Road in Dundee, Michigan began Friday, April 19.

Eventually 11,000 seedlings will be planted in the nature preserve. There are 10 acres which are to be planted with trees and shrubs, and some 30 acres which are to be planted with prairie grasses and wildflowers.

About 35 acres will be enrolled in the Farm Service Agency program called CREP, which seeks to control soil erosion near rivers and streams with natural plantings. CREP provides some funding for this area of the park for a number of years.

The goal is to bring the former farmland back to an "oak-openings" state—what the pioneers found when they came to Michigan. "This part of Michigan really had some fairly large prairies originally," said Rob Peven of the Monroe County Planning office.

Monroe County Commissioner Dale Zorn was present on Friday, and said that someday the county would like to put in paved paths, so that the area will be handicapped accessible.

"This is the only natural preserve we have in the county, and I think it's a real plus to the parks system," said Mr. Zorn. "So far, our protection of the natural resources seems to be working, with the increased number of eagles, hawks and falcons in the area."

Mr. Peven did much of the research for the new park, and arranged for trees and shrubs to be planted, which were purchased through the Monroe Conservation Office. Seeds for prairie grasses and wildflowers also are on order, and

the group Pheasants Forever may help out the project by lending some seed-drilling equipment.

A gathering of officials was held on Friday, April 19, and students from Meadow Montessori School in Monroe were on hand to plant the first seedlings. The seedlings included redbud, crabapple, and wild plum.

Eventually, some 40 different kinds of trees and shrubs will be planted. Mary Webb, chair of Monroe County Parks and Recreation, and chair of the Monroe County Planning Commission, said. "Eventually, we'll get some rustic benches out here, along the paths. Of course, we don't want people walking off the path."

Don Mitchell, chair of the River Raisin Watershed Council, also was on hand.

Al Norwood, from the United States Department of Agriculture, and a conservation officer, showed the students how to use the shovels to loosen the soil and make a place for the seedlings. He instructed them how to plant them, and firm the soil around afterward.

Students from the Meadow Montessori School have been working closely with the Monroe County Planning office, and have a weekly outdoor project, such as building bluebird boxes, or studying soil science, so they were invited to plant the first trees.

On Saturday morning, April 20, Dundee cross country team members and Viking Volunteers also planted trees, for about four hours.

A group of orange-clad trustees from the Monroe County Jail also was at the site, on the other side of the road, planting seedlings.

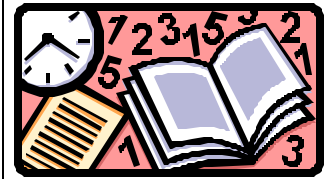
Field offices are encouraged to send similar articles for reprint. Email the story to:

rennaowens@aol.com

Continued on Page 7

SELF-MATTERS--Creating Your Life From the Inside Out

By Dorothea Martinez



Does your life reflect the real you, or are you living to please the people who are important in your life? In the book, *Self-Matters, Creating Your Life From the Inside Out*, Dr. Philip McGraw feels that many of us are not living faithfully to our authentic selves. This creates a void, an ever-present feeling that we are incomplete, restless, and emptiness that won't go away. It's a hole in our souls. We may try to fill that hole in a number of ways: by smoking or drinking; by incessant working; over investing ourselves in a mate or our children; having an affair; or getting a divorce. In other words, there's seldom a time in our lives when all is at peace and in balance. If you are experiencing any of these feelings, then please read this book.

This review highlights three of the book's twelve chapters. The three chapters are: *Defining the Authentic Self*; *Your Self-Concept*; and *Your Five Pivotal People*.

Defining the Authentic Self - Dr. McGraw defines the authentic self as the *you* that can be found at your absolute core. It is the part of you that is not defined by your job, or your function, or your role. It is the composite of all your unique gifts, skills, abilities, interests, talents, insights, and wisdom.

Believe it or not all of us possess some of the qualities mentioned above. Many of us are talented but may never use our talents simply because we have never acknowledge that we have them. McGraw explains that when we are asked who we are, we normally define ourselves according to what we do, rather than the skills or talents that we possess. He acknowledges that what we do is certainly a factor in who we are. But there's a whole other level of existence, distinct from what we do, that is the real, true, genuine sum and substance of who we are. When we refer to ourselves according to what we do, we are denying the authentic person that lies within us and giving credit to our fictional selves. He defines the fictional self as the person that we believe ourselves to be from the labels given to us by the significant people in our lives--labels in which we have come to believe as being true. If we accept these labels as the definition of who we are, then we change to that at our most core level. Once we accept the label as valid, we replace our definition of who we really are with who the labels tell us we are. He goes on to say that our fictional selves are the sources of wrong identify and wrong information, and that many of us don't know who the real person is that exist within us. Our first task is to define who we really are. This book tells us how to do that.

Your Self-Concept - McGraw defines the self-concept as a bundle of beliefs, facts, opinions, and perceptions about ourselves that we travel through life with, every moment of every day. I think most of us can identify with that definition very easily. When I look in the mirror, I like the person I see but I'm not blinded to the fact that there's always room for improvement.

McGraw tells us that the self-concept shows in the way we communicate and send messages. He says only 7% of all communication is verbal. We communicate in other ways such as behaviorally, emotionally, physically, spiritually and interactively. Wondering what the other 93% are saying about us? We need to think about our demeanor, our attitude and our approach to the world. What is it saying about us? Facial expressions, eye contact and other non-verbal behaviors say a great deal more about a person than actual words. For example, one can tell if a person is confident by the manner in which they carry themselves--the way they walk--shoulders straight, with heads held high. One can also tell by the way we interact with others. Similarly, a person who lacks self-confidence is slow to approach new situations for fear of failure. They're the one who we hear saying negative things and putting themselves down. A confident person doesn't hesitate before saying, "I know I can." They approach the world with a winning attitude.

Your Pivotal People - McGraw describes the pivotal people in our lives as those people that we encounter and get help from along the way. These people may include our parents, spouse, or siblings. They could include our teachers, friends and coworkers. He explains that some of the people in our lives are genuinely positive influences and some are horribly negative.

Continued on Page 7

GOOD ADVICE: BOOK REVIEW

Continued from Page 6

Out of the many people in our lives who influence us positively or negatively, research shows that there are as few as five pivotal people who have left impressions on our concept and self that are impossible to erase.

Because we are significantly influenced by what the pivotal people in our lives tell us, we sometimes carry negative be-

liefs about ourselves into adulthood that we need to rid ourselves of.

This is a "must read" book because there's a great deal to learn about ourselves which can help our growth and development. I'm a firm believer that the better in touch we are with ourselves, the better we are able to interact with others. I also believe that when we stop learning, we stop living.

This book contains valuable self measurement instruments that can help us to learn different things about ourselves. These things can be very useful in life.

I found the writer to be very amusing in the way he writes, but also very truthful. You owe it to yourself to pick up a copy of this book and read it—it's packed with valuable information.

"Let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful!!!"

2002 CONFERENCE

Continued from Page 1

We want to show your supervisors and others through demonstrated performance what a tremendous return on investment they're getting by supporting your attendance at The Organization annual training conference.

Working in concert with top NRCS management and our NEDC we will continue to complement the agreed-upon training, outreach, and technology transfer agendas of NRCS.

FARM BILL BECOMES LAW

Reprint from the internet

On May 13, 2002, President Bush signed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 into law.

This legislation -- known as the 2002 Farm Bill -- contains record-level support for environmental stewardship.

Conservation provisions in the Farm Bill will

help farmers and ranchers meet environmental challenges on their land.

The bill simplifies existing programs and offers new programs to address high priority environmental and production goals.

Hats Off to the many NRCS employees who participated in review teams and working groups related to this historic legislation.

For FAQ about the new Farm Bill, click onto the web:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/farmbill/fbfaqhome.asp>

<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm>

Email articles and pictures to rennaowens@aol.com

Newsletter Committee - The Link

Renna Owens, Editor

Cara Clark, Designer

47412 Torrington Drive North

Canton, Michigan 48188